

*Introductory Addresses on the Science and Art Department
and the South Kensington Museum.*

No. 2.

ON

THE GIFT

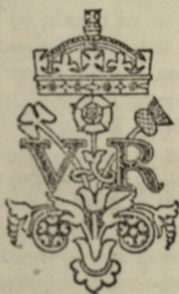
OF THE

SHEEPSHANKS COLLECTION,

WITH A VIEW TO THE

FORMATION OF A NATIONAL GALLERY
OF BRITISH ART.

By RICHARD REDGRAVE, R.A.,
INSPECTOR-GENERAL FOR ART.



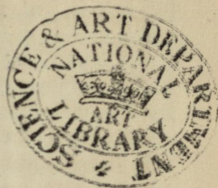
LONDON:

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AGENTS TO THE SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT OF THE
COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION.

1857.

[Price One Penny.]



Introductory Address on the Science and Art Department
and the South Kensington Museum

No. 8

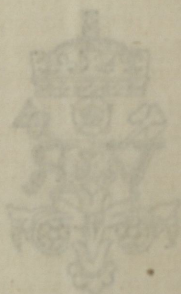
THE GIFT

SHEPHERD'S COLLECTION

WITH A VIEW TO THE

FORMATION OF A NATIONAL GALLERY
OF BRITISH ART

By RICHARD REDGRAVE, R.A.
INSPECTOR-GENERAL FOR ART



LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 100, FLEET STREET.

ADVICE TO THE LONDON ARTS AND CRAFTS SOCIETY
COMMISSIONED BY THE SOCIETY

[Price One Shilling]

AN ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

I AM to address you this night on the munificent gift made to the public by Mr. Sheepshanks, of a choice collection of pictures and drawings by British artists; given, to use his own words, "with a view to the establishment of a collection of pictures and other works of art, fully representing BRITISH ART, and worthy of national support;" to be placed in a well-lighted and otherwise suitable gallery, and called "the National Gallery of British Art." "And whereas," he recites in the deed of gift, "I conceive that such a collection should be placed in a gallery in an open and airy situation, possessing the quiet necessary to the study and enjoyment of works of art, and free from the inconveniences and dirt of the main thoroughfares of the Metropolis, I consider that such a gallery might be usefully erected at Kensington." And he goes on to add, "in the hope that other proprietors of pictures and other works of art may be induced to further the same object, the said pictures and drawings shall be deposited in such gallery with any other pictures or works of art that may be subsequently placed there by other contributors, as it is not my desire that my collection of pictures and drawings should be kept apart or bear my name as such." Many other points are recited in the deed, which will be referred to in the progress of the address, but at present I would group what I have to say to you under the three principal heads to which the document in question has led us, viz. :—

1. The formation of a National Collection of Pictures truly representing "British Art ;"
2. The erection of a suitable gallery to contain them ; and,
3. The advantages of the site selected for the Sheepshanks'

Gallery, and the bearing it has on the question of Art Galleries for the Metropolis generally.

I must remind you before I commence that, although deputed to address you on this subject, I alone am responsible for any opinions or suggestions which it may contain.

Whatever had been done in other countries, England had made no approach to the formation of a collection of pictures for the use of the public until the present century was somewhat advanced.

It is true that some of her early monarchs had encouraged art, and that even at the commencement of the sixteenth century many men of high talent, both Germans, Flemings, and Italians, had been invited to this country by Henry the Eighth, and in the next century by Charles the First, and that both these monarchs munificently rewarded art, and employed agents abroad to purchase for them the rarest pictures and statues that could be obtained in the countries where they were produced.

Many of our chief nobility, also, at these periods were great collectors, and the country was gradually enriched by the possession of works of the highest class.

Yet it was only as private individuals, and to adorn their palaces and mansions, that monarchs and noblemen encouraged artists and purchased their works, and the idea of making them available for the instruction and gratification of the public was a thought of later growth, even abroad, and does not appear to have been contemplated in our own country until the commencement of the present century. The matter was pressed upon the attention of the Legislature on the occasion of a proposed gift of pictures by Sir G. Beaumont which ended in the purchase in 1824 of the Angerstein Collection, to form the nucleus of a National Gallery.*

Long before this period art in this country had made rapid strides; Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Moreland, Wilson, and others, had laid the foundation of the British School, and the public, already instructed by the annual gatherings of works of art in the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the old Water Colour Society's rooms, had been

* Dulwich Gallery was given in 1810, but this, as well as Windsor and Hampton Court, was little accessible to the public. The Dulwich pictures were offered to the State on the condition of providing a building, which was refused, and the gift was made to Alleyn's College.

somewhat accustomed to exhibitions of pictures, and had learned to appreciate artists and their works.

Thus it may be fairly said that the newly-formed gallery, instead of producing in the public a taste for art, was itself rather an evidence that the public was educated to demand and require it. The gallery at its first formation contained about forty pictures, chiefly of the Italian School, and although among them were some six or eight pictures the work of British artists, it was the works of the old masters that were looked upon as forming the British National Gallery of Art.

Here, then, was a great step in advance,—*the establishment in this country of a National Gallery of Pictures, open for the instruction and gratification of the people generally.* It is quite evident, however, that there was little belief at that time in British Art. The collection was substantially formed of the works of ancient masters; and neither then nor since has any Government aid been given to add, by purchase, to the few British pictures it contained, while large sums have been spent and the collection nobly increased in the other direction. Now, of the value of a collection of the fine works of the great masters in art, and of the desirableness of making a collection of such works, while it is in any way possible, there can be no doubt; but this is not the subject of my present address. To artists, the examination and study of such works are of inestimable importance, while to others, educated to understand the high qualities they undoubtedly contain, their contemplation is a great pleasure. Yet even to these persons they often prove a snare, preventing them from appreciating any excellence different from the qualities, and these often extraneous qualities, which such works possess.

Sir George Beaumont, who in his life was considered a great authority, used to say that a good picture should be like a good fiddle—brown. On being shown a picture by a rising artist, which had a greater likeness to the colour of nature than usual, after surveying it awhile with attention, he remarked, with evident signs of disapprobation, "Ah, but where is your brown tree?" He used to contend that every landscape required a dark foreground, and for other dogmas built upon rules of art rather than effects of nature.

So that we see that even those best educated to appreciate such works may be led astray, while the public generally too often look on such pictures with a kind of awe, and think they are to be valued from their great age, and are precious in proportion to their obscurity, as if excellence de-

pended upon antiquity, and beauty and age were interchangeable terms.

True art, when it arises spontaneously in any country, reflects the feelings and ideas of the people and age to which it is addressed. Thus all early art used in the service of the Church was necessarily of a deeply religious character. Yet how distinct is that character at the same period in Italy and in Flanders? In the hands of Giotto, Ghirlandaio, Angelico, and Francia, it is spiritual and ideal; embodying rather the soul of religious sentiment than approaching the actual. In the Low Countries, on the contrary, the heads of saints and historic personages, nay, even of the Saviour himself, instead of being ideal impersonations of the holiness or virtues which were the characteristics of the apostles and martyrs, as of the Lord of All, seem rather to aim at the actual. The living persons of the painter's day are the actors of the great scene of man's redemption. Instead of abstract passions or sentiments, the men that Hemling, Van Eyk, or Vander Weiden saw around them are repeated on their canvas; touched, however, with the fullest expression of love or hate, of awe or reverence, of which man's soul is capable. The Rhineland plains, the Burgundian cities, fill up the background where the Magi worship or where the shepherds bow to their new-born Lord; while the spires of Aix or Cologne represent for them the City of the great King. The people of the painter's day gazed and saw no anomaly in all this; they felt, in faces like their own, the spirit of life that the painter had breathed into his canvas; they acknowledged in his creations men of like passions with themselves, and were stirred with a feeling of the sorrows and misfortunes of those whose history was thus represented.

The simplicity of the Fleming is not more apparent in these early works than the sombre, stern spirit of the Spaniard in the art of his country, or the magnificence of Venice in that of the painters of the City of the Sea.

As time rolled on a new spirit arose in the Church and in the world, and painters, inspired rather by learning than by feeling, produced works which spoke more to the understanding than the heart. Yet this was in accordance with the spirit of the time and with the spread of classic learning at the revival, and it was only when the painter rather sought his inspiration from the works of others, his predecessors in art, than from within himself, that art ceased to make an impression on the whole people.

I might go on to show how singularly Dutch art corresponds to Dutch manners of the period, in its plodding labour, its minute neatness, its coarseness, without wit or humour ; or French art, voluptuous, sensual, and merely ornamental, under the three last Louis's, and suddenly becoming pseudo-classic, stern, and cold, under the changed spirit of the people at the era of the Revolution. But enough has been said to show that, while the educated few can appreciate (and who so fully as the artist !) the noble works of the great masters of other ages and of all schools, the general public is most influenced and delights most in those works which are produced in the spirit of its own age and its own people. If this be indeed the case, a gallery of pictures, to deserve the distinction of a National Gallery, should not consist of works of ancient masters. This title, if a specific one is used at all, should rather be reserved for a National Gallery of British Art.

It may be said, has British Art identified itself with the home feelings and mind of the British public ? Is it, and has it been in correspondence with the age that produced it ? I think it may fairly be answered that it has.

When art was really born in this country, religion rather repudiated than sought it. It offered to deck our churches, but was rejected. Obtaining no encouragement, no patronage, in this direction, it has sought a place in men's homes, and addressed itself to their affections ; and it is to the credit of our national character, as well as to our artists, that it has never pandered to sensuality or descended to the base and low in the subjects of its choice.

It is greatly to be regretted that the fear engendered by the hard battle our forefathers had to fight against the corruptions of Christianity excluded religious subjects from the artist's choice ; for I am convinced that they would have treated such subjects, if with less spirituality and grandeur than the Italian, at least with the earnestness of early Flemish art, touched perhaps with a deeper and warmer glow of the religion of the heart. But while a demand for such subjects is a thing to be hoped for, our artists *have* laboured in the cause of religion, and he who comes first on the list of English painters was at least a deep and earnest "preacher of righteousness." I allude to William Hogarth. All will allow how truly English was his art, how peculiar to his own age and time, yet containing truths for all time. Arising at a period when the habits of society were less refined than at present, and vice more outwardly expressed

and tolerated than would now be permitted, he was the merciless satirist, the scourger of profligacy in all ranks, and read to all the most stirring and terrible lessons as a moralist without forgetting that he was a painter.

After Hogarth—Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Wilson must be considered as founders of the modern British School; for the two first, as portrait painters, it is hardly possible to take too high a rank. Those who have been enabled to see their works in the late Manchester Exhibition will feel how thoroughly such portraits as the “Nelly O’Brien” or the “Lady Althorp and Child” of Reynolds, or “Mrs. Graham” or the “Blue Boy” of Gainsborough, are worthy to be placed side by side even with those of Titian or Vandyk. In execution they are much below these masters, but in many of the highest qualities of art, in their thoroughly original and English treatment of Englishmen and English beauty, they will bear to be compared without loss. But we must pass them by, as not represented in the Collection which forms the chief subject of this evening’s address, to speak of Wilkie, with whose works a change came over British art; for with him that false conventionality into which art had fallen, and which was upheld above the more familiar treatment which brings art home to the feelings of the people, was wholly disregarded. He chose the simplest subjects for his pencil, such even as those upon which the Dutch painters had laboured; but he cast over them a tinge of the simplicity and seriousness of the Scotch character, and lifted them at once above all grossness, making art consonant with higher feelings by touches of simplicity, of tenderness, and of affection. Of this class are the pictures of “The Card Players,” “The Village Politicians,” “Guess my Name,” “Blind Man’s Buff,” “The Rent Day,” and many others, while he approached the higher subjects of the pencil in “The Reading of the Will,” “The Distraining for Rent,” and “The Waterloo Gazette.” Always, however, so treating his subjects as to make them level to the apprehension of the masses: hence the great popularity of his works. I should gladly refer to his pictures, already the property of the nation from the gift of Mr. Vernon, to show how widely he has departed from a mere Dutch view of subjects in the “Village Festival;” but it is necessary rather to confine myself to the present Collection, which contains one fine work by Wilkie, his picture of “Duncan Gray.”

Tired of the flouting mood of Meg, and of the jeers

of his companions who peep through the door, Duncan feels that "slighted love is sair to bide." The whole action of the figure, the expression of the face and hands, thoroughly illustrate the words of the poet :

" Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie dee ?
She may gae to—France for me."

While Meg, piqued by the change in her lover, is evidently veering round in her turn.

" How it came let doctors tell,
Meg grew sick as he grew well."

Duncan has at length found the true way to woo her, who ere while had "tossed her head fu' high"; and we feel as we look at her, that the wooing will end as most wooings do.

" Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath,
And they were crouse and canty baith,
Ha ! ha ! the wooing o'it."

At this time also arose a number of excellent landscape painters, to whom I would fain refer. Landscape painting, is an art in which at least our countrymen have deserved a great reputation, and it is well represented in the Collection by the pictures of Turner, Constable, Collins, Callcott, Stanfield, Roberts, Danby, and Cooke, each with his own strongly-marked characteristics. Some of these are so peculiarly English in subject, and in their treatment of it, that their works appeal strongly to English feelings ; but I must leave them for the present, the rather that they need no explanation, and proceed with the subject-pictures, as it is on these that I desire more peculiarly to dwell.

I have said that it is a characteristic of English pictures to appeal to the affections and home-feelings of the people ; and the subjects chosen are generally some touching incident of daily life, or from our own poets or writers : thus they are open to the understandings of all. How much more are the general public likely to be touched and softened by such pictures as Landseer's "Random Shot" or "Shepherd's Chief Mourner" than by the Boar Hunts of even a Rubens or Snyders ! In the "Random Shot," the lesson is almost too painful ; yet, like a tragedy, it delights while it afflicts us. A young fawn stands on the snow-drifted moor beside the dead body of its dam. The foot-

prints in the white snow are dabbled with the mother's blood—she has been smitten by the cruel hunter's careless shot into the herd. Who is there that, shuddering at the slow death in prospect for the harmless little one, does not forswear the hunter's sport, which leads even by an accident to such an end as this? Or take the other beautiful work, "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner," one of the pictures in our noble gift. What a history does it contain of companionship on the hills in storm and sunshine, of toils and watchings, of hunger and unrest endured together; the whole of the shepherd's simple life is seen on that little canvass—lonely it was but for that *one* friend, now left to mourn over his master's grave. Examine the details of the picture, they will tell you at a glance that master's age, his religion, and his hopes, of his hard fare and bare lodging, apart from his fellow-men and kind, but finding strong affection in the brute creation; "The righteous man is merciful to his beast," saith that Scripture which lies open at his lonely coffin's side, and that he *was* merciful, the attachment even after death of his faithful colly shows. Here is a subject that it wants neither rank nor education to comprehend: the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot fail to understand it, for a dog is the companion of the humblest, and even the beggar has one by his side. The commonest minds may be touched to tears by the tale of a life and history that a single glance tells.

Or if you would see how our painters touch the incidents of every-day life, look at the pictures by Webster, which are also included in the spontaneous gift of Mr. Sheepshanks. In the "Going to" and "Coming from the Fair" of this painter you see the simple pleasures of the agricultural population, not a stilted theatrical display of country life such as we should find depicted in the false pastorals of Watteau and Lancret, wherein kings and queens, and lords and ladies, play at Colin and Lucretia, at Phyllis and Corydon—but true-hearted, honest country ploughmen, with kindly hearts and full of love for little children. How different from the drunken boors and frows of the Dutch school, maudlin and filthy in their cups, pouring a dram perchance down the throats of their fractious children to stunt them into the same dwarfed mis-shapen growth as themselves. Look again at this painter's picture of "Sickness and Health;" how simple, yet how touching! It may not be painted with the charming facility of Teniers, nor have the lustrous jewel-like richness of Ostade, but how is

it touched with the sweet affections, the joys, and sorrows of home ! At a cottage door, beneath a sheltering tree, and looking out on fields and flowers, sits, propped up with pillows, a sick child. The languor and self-indulgence of returning health is in every limb. A smile plays over her pale face as she looks at her healthy sisters dancing together beneath the flickering shadows to the Savoyard's music. How true is the tender expression of the mother, who hangs over her, and who for a time forgets the sportive beauty of her healthful children to muse over this stricken one, and to see if the tide of sickness has really ebbed away ! It is a tale common to every home, and touching to every heart.

It would be tedious to draw your attention specially to his other works. The "Village Choristers," for instance, showing the simple country worshippers joining heartily in their rural psalmody—each voice having its appropriate character, each doing his best, and thinking what he does the very soul of the choral service. Or, "The Contrary Winds," which, like so many other of Webster's works, lets us so completely into the sports of happy childhood.

Then, again, there is Mulready, a painter of a different *métier*, the scope of whose art ranges further and wider; with drawing as true, colouring as rich, and execution as perfect as in the older Dutch masters, but with subjects of a far purer character. Look, for instance, at that picture of "The Vicar's Wife choosing her Wedding Gown"—loveable and beautiful in her sphere as the spring flower whose name she bears. All may read the work who will ; its tale speaks to the simplest. The careful young wife, notably solicitous in her choice—for in those days a silken gown was almost an heir-loom ; the loving, admiring husband ; the tradesman of the olden school, polite and prosy, whose wares may be depended upon, and will stand any of Mrs. Primrose's rubbings and peerings. All the incidents are truthful, all the details appropriate, and the eye instantly rests with delight on what the mind approves when it looks into it.

Or, look at his earlier picture of "The Fight Interrupted," and we are at once school-boys again. We take part with one or other of the combatants : that cowardly big boy leaning against the pump, and showing the first drawn blood to the group around him, has little of our sympathy ; but, we dare not, under the mild rebuking eye of the pedagogue, advocate his pugnacious adversary, though

we do like him best and admire his spirit. In the background is the work-weary usher, too tired of his constant charge to care to interfere in playground fights, while near him, to be out of harm's way, lingers the sick boy, too spiritless to join the fray.

How finely is "First Love" touched in one of his works, and the last loving tendance on wearying age in another; and the character of all is perfection and completeness. Truly this portion of the gift is of singular variety and excellence.

I must barely remind you of the pictures it contains by Cope and Horsley, by Collins, Newton, and others, and dwell for a moment on another group of works—those of Leslie—which, for graceful humour, beauty, and character, are without rivals in any school. Leslie, beyond all other English painters, brings home to us the characters of the Shaksperian drama. Look at his picture of "The Dinner at Page's House." The two comely, buxom, merry wives, brim over with fun and kindly humour—they can appreciate the wit and breeding of Sir John, yet are they just the true-hearted Englishwomen to enter thoroughly into a stratagem to punish his presuming on their open-hearted hospitality. Who has painted such a Bardolph as there stands behind Falstaff's chair? "that knight of the burning lamp," whom his master describes as "a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire light." This is the very personification of the man of whom Falstaff exclaims, "Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night between tavern and tavern, but the sack thou hast drunk me would have bought lights as good, cheap at the dearest chandlers in Europe. I have maintained that Salamander of yours with fire any time these two-and-thirty years." Moreover, it is the same "white-livered, red-faced," petty larceny villain that the page declared "stole a lute case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence." Look at Parson Hugh and Justice Shallow at the head of the table; are they not very types of their class? at Slender and his stolid serving-man—at bluff, hearty Page, knowing too well the treasure he has got in a loving, true-hearted wife to fear to trust her with any Sir John.

It is within the power of the painter to do more for the dramatist in one respect than the actor can. The actor may render unto us the feeling, the meaning, the mind of the author, as expressed in the dialogue, but the person of the actor rarely gives us the ideal of the poet. Here the

painter has more scope, and can give us the very image of the persons of the drama, and make us acquainted with the true Falstaff, Slender, Bardolph, and Shallow that the poet describes.

Four more of the principal pictures by Leslie are from our great poet—three of them works of unmatched excellence. Who has given us such character and characteristic action of the shrewish wife as is seen in the “Katharine?” such contrast of knavery and simplicity as in the “Autolycus;” and then for beauty, truly “the transformations of the gods themselves were never for a piece of beauty rarer” than he has delineated in the peerless “Perdita.” Who has made us acquainted with the inimitable Sancho as Leslie has, or introduced us so thoroughly to dear, simple Uncle Toby? Throughout his works the character is nicely discriminated with the keenest sense of humour, yet without the smallest approach to caricature.

Now, it is through these our English painters that we must learn to love and understand the old masters. What is there in the *subjects* of the old masters, with all their beauties and all their excellences,—granting that they have all that are attributed to them,—calculated to touch the mind of our own people like these I have named? What to our multitudes are fat Bacchuses and maudlin Silenuses? What do they know of Cephalus and Procris, of Diana and Endymion? To them Mercury and Venus are but mere names. Nor with the dreary saints and dark martyrs of the olden church have they more sympathy; nay, they have often to overcome a repugnance, and a natural one, to the subjects of such works; and though it is true that Sebastian submits to his arrows, and Laurence to his gridiron, but too often with a pleasing calmness; it is mostly the material martyrdom, rather than the mental struggle, that has been depicted in such works. And if the *subjects* are rarely such as can interest them, is it true that they can appreciate the art? The visitors to our galleries may and do bow down to names, and affect a pleasure where they are told they ought to feel it; because, as the Vicar’s son was taught, “it is the fashion to praise Pietro Perugino.” But this is the last thing to be desired, and one emotion of genuine love and admiration more to be wished for than all this got-up admiration. Let me not be misunderstood, however. Let me not be thought to depreciate the true and noble works of the old masters. Would that our age could produce such, in their rarest and highest qualities—produce such, really in harmony with the feelings

of our age and generation ! No, it is the cant of false admiration that I contend against, the cant of pretending to love, and admire, and understand that which we know must be wholly unintelligible to the multitude, and to a knowledge of which they must be led up step by step, if at all. Even we who look on these master works with the eye of knowledge feel what great allowances have to be made for the works we love. What accumulations of varnish, dirt, and smoke ! What destruction at the hands of pretended restorers and cleaners ! What substitutions of the false for the true, of the copy for the original ! What changes at the hand of time ! With all these disadvantages to contend with, it is like love dimly retracing youthful beauty in the face of age. And when we have made allowances such as these, and much more than these, that must be allowed for, we have to remember that all which is true, and all that care has preserved from "Time's destroying fingers," is not always excellent—that all is not *Rafaëlle* which is of *Rafaëlle*, all that is by *Titian* is not necessarily worthy of him.

Now, in order to cover all these changes and deteriorations of works noble and glorious at first, and which have a majesty even in their decay, a false theory has been invented and maintained, "that pictures improve by time," improve vastly as they get a certain quality called tone by dirt and varnish. Many a choice work has been thus *improved* before its time by ignorant and impudent pretenders. I pray you do not believe in this theory. Do not believe that the picture we see to-day is equal to what it was when it left the painter's easel. He knew best that conceived the work, that thought it into form, whose cunning hand traced it, who fetched it from the depths of his own heart, and fashioned its feelings into order in his active brain. He knew best what the work should be. He considered it, and pronounced it finished ; and it is not to be imagined that he left his own choice handiwork to time and chance to complete. Had it been necessary to give his work the tone and hue of age, could he not have done that which the commonest picture-vamper is able to perform, who gives with ease the true *patina* to his manufactured *Titians* and second-hand *Rafaëles*. No ; a little allowance for change the painter might have made ; but, believe me, he of old—as our own painters of to-day—wished his picture to be seen at once to the best advantage, and I have no doubt that we should admire much more intensely and value more highly those masterpieces of past artists, could we see them as they

first left the hands of the mighty geniuses who produced them.

If nothing else takes place, the irregular changes in the painter's materials are sufficient to mar the full effect and harmony of most works. One colour flies, another stands firm. More or less irregular change is going on over the whole surface, and the most refined, and therefore most evanescent, qualities of the painter's art, fleet the soonest and change the quickest from what his hand left, and his judgment willed the work to be.

Beside the inducements arising from the evident communion of feeling between the artist and his own countrymen, there are others which particularly point out the present as a proper time to form a National Collection of British Art. Is it nothing that we should cherish British Art for the national honour? In other lands, monuments and statues would have adorned the birth-cities of men who had done far less to deserve them than many of our great painters. The depreciation, or at least neglect, of the fame of our own worthies, which is but too much the characteristic of Englishmen, has led to ignorance and depreciation of our art by foreigners. Until the display of British Art at Paris in 1851, they did not believe in any native school of art here. That display at Paris somewhat opened their eyes, and the much fuller gathering of this year at Manchester, which includes the works of our great deceased artists, not permitted to be included in the Paris Collection, will tend to obtain for us some little recognition as a school.* A national collection, including a proper representation of all who have contributed to advance art in this country, would confirm the impression that has been made, and give our school the position that it so justly deserves.

There is a double aim in all collections of art—the one the accumulation of rare and choice works only, for the pleasure and improvement they afford; the other historical, to illustrate the growth of art and the succession of artists, either generally, or, as in the case I am advocating, in a particular country. When could such a collection as would illustrate British Art be made so well as at present? The art (except as to one or two scattered pupils of foreign painters) is scarcely more than a century old; and ancient

* The change of feeling in France on this point is well shown in a late article in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*."

men still among us have lived in the memory of its first professors. A series of their works could be readily obtained ; the genuineness of their pictures undoubtedly determined ; their mode of practice is well known. The presentation pictures required from its members on their election to the honours of the Royal Academy is in itself almost the skeleton of such a collection. Mr. Vernon's gift would swell its proportions, Mr. Turner's largely aid it ; and now Mr. Sheepshanks, denying himself the pleasure of their daily contemplation, has nobly given up the whole of his collection during his lifetime, not to form an exclusive Sheepshanks Gallery, but to form part of a National Gallery of Art, part of such a series as I am desirous of seeing gathered together while time and opportunity allow, and for which purpose a small annual grant from the state would abundantly suffice.

A collection of British pictures if made would have to include both works in oil and works in water colours. Nor would it be perfect unless there were added to it such sketches and drawings as serve to illustrate the mode in which a painter thinks out his work, the sketches he makes before commencing his labours, and the studies which assist him in its progress to completion.

Now as to water-colour painting, nothing has yet been done to gather together a permanent public collection of that art in which England stands unrivalled, and which Englishmen are at least allowed to have entirely originated. It is within our own century that, in its present condition, it has arisen ; almost with the men of our own day and who are our own contemporaries. True it is that the master-spirit who gave it birth has passed away, the artist to whom of all others it is most indebted ; but in dying he has rendered it still more obligatory on the State to honour the art he commenced,—for, with that feeling which we have seen the love of art engenders, the desire to enable others to partake of its pleasures, Turner left by his will to the nation the most complete and valuable series of sketches, drawings, and pictures ever produced by one man, so that in this one collection is contained the history of an art, its birth, growth, and meridian splendour ; and it really requires but little trouble to gather round this centre the labours of Turner's rivals and competitors, in order to form a complete history of an episode in art, to do a just tribute of honour to our own artists, and at the same time to ourselves as a people. It is a curious fact that Englishmen

have always excelled in works in this medium, and that in the days long passed, when our painters in oil were content to be humble followers of the celebrated Flemings invited to our shores, our Hilliards, our Olivers, and Coopers as portrait painters had no rivals in their delightful art. They laboured with a refinement unequalled abroad, produced works which have won for them world-wide fame, and have transmitted their art to right worthy successors in our own days.

I have said that a Collection of British Art would be imperfect unless it included those studies which serve to illustrate the first thoughts of our painters, and the mode in which they have proceeded with their works, and here again, through the patriotic generosity of Mr. Sheepshanks, we are supplied with an excellent commencement for such a collection.

With the oil-pictures which he has given to the nation there is a small, yet interesting, series of drawings and studies. Such works at present have not the same attraction for the public as pictures, but the time may come when they will prove perhaps of equal interest. Who would not desire to observe the first dawnings of talent, the growth of art-power in a man of genius. And here will be found the means of such observation. One frame contains the drawings of Edwin Landseer in his earliest childhood; another, one of those rapid yet complete productions of his mature age. The growth of a thought also into a complete work—the studies that preceded its completion, the changes that it underwent in progress—how interesting to all who will enter upon their consideration! Such will be found here by Callcott, Wilkie, Cope, Mulready, and others. Should we neglect to increase such a collection now, when ample means for forming it are at hand, we may have to regret hereafter, and to obtain at a far higher cost, a far less perfect series than can now be readily formed. The value of these studies has always been felt by the true appreciator of the artist. The drawings of Raffaele and Michael Angelo are as costly as their other works; hundreds have been paid for a single genuine drawing of the former master. Such works will often be found to contain a greater freshness, a purer feeling, a more facile elegance than the labours whose completion they served to forward. How much of study, how much of labour, a picture has cost the artist he alone knows; something of it such studies may serve to indicate. The world has ever been too ready to impute

everything to the inspiration of genius, and to overlook the truth that, however inspired, he who would win fame must

“Scorn delights, and live laborious days;”

and that when we see a noble picture we see not the labour of the artist, but merely the result of that labour.

Having thus briefly glanced at the nature of this precious collection, and, I trust, led you to consider the claims of the works it contains to nationality, and the views which its munificent donor had in giving them to the people of England, I have next to say a few words on the subject of the erection of a suitable gallery to contain these and other works of the like kind. You will recollect that Mr. Sheepshanks—noticing the long delay which had arisen in making provision for the other gifts to the nation by Mr. Vernon and Mr. Turner—had wisely stipulated that a suitable building should be prepared to receive his pictures *before* he parted with their possession.

As the donor had connected the *charge* of his collection with the Science and Art Department, itself only temporarily provided with suitable accommodation, it was necessary, until the Legislature has determined the permanent locality for the Department, to construct a gallery of a somewhat temporary nature for this gift also. Still, however, various conditions had to be observed,—

First, the greatest possible security for the works against fire, as well as from improper exposure to sunlight, to bad air, and to atmospheric influences.

Secondly, the best possible arrangements for the display and lighting of the pictures; and this also with a view to providing for opening the gallery to the public at night, so that the industrial classes who are actively employed in the day might have the means of visiting the galleries and enjoying the pictures in these their only leisure hours; and,

Thirdly, the pictures, being all of a cabinet size, were to be hung near the eye, and suitable provision was to be made for their convenient inspection by the public.

Many other conditions had to be attended to, such as the thorough warming and ventilation of the apartments, the best mode of preventing accumulations of dust, &c. Added to this, while the work was to be sufficiently solid and substantial, it was to be erected rapidly, in order to receive the pictures as soon as possible, and with no expense that could possibly be avoided.

The gallery provided to fulfil these conditions has been suc-

cessfully constructed under the direction of Capt. Fowke, R.E., and you have all had an opportunity of inspecting it. It is almost thoroughly fireproof, and with every provision for warmth and ventilation. It contains, in addition to the four rooms forming the picture-gallery, four rooms below of equal dimensions, for the display of other art-collections belonging to the public, of which the Department has charge. The arrangements for the security and proper display of the pictures, and the lighting both by day and night are considered adequate and satisfactory, and the whole has been erected at a cost of 4,500*l*.

At the time the late Mr. Vernon was about to offer his pictures to the nation, Mr. Sheepshanks proposed to unite with him for the same patriotic purpose, merely inserting a condition that a building should be previously prepared for the collection as a whole. Mr. Vernon preferred to give his works alone, and that condition was not inserted. That Mr. Sheepshanks acted, not only *most unselfishly*, but also wisely, is proved by the result. Mr. Vernon's pictures yet lack a suitable building for their reception, while those of Mr. Sheepshanks are provided with one—I have reason to believe entirely to his satisfaction.

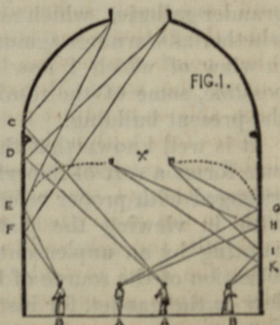
The collection in its present state, being rather select than extensive, I cannot but consider it most fortunate, (pending the greater question of a permanent gallery both for the pictures by ancient masters and for the works of the British School,) that circumstances have rendered the erection of the present building necessary. Without any great outlay of public money, it has enabled us to make a series of careful experiments, both as to fire-proof construction, proper proportions and modes of lighting, warming, and ventilation, which will be extremely valuable in prospect of these grander galleries, which must shortly be provided—valuable whether as warnings against failure or assurances of success; in view of which I now proceed to explain, as briefly as possible, some of the results attained in the construction of the present building.

It is well known that the varnished surface of an oil picture forms a sort of imperfect mirror, and unless the light is arranged with proper reference to the position of the spectator in viewing the picture, he is prevented seeing the painting by an unpleasant glitter formed by the imperfect reflection of the source of light upon its surface, as the window or the gas-jet, for instance. This would be made quite clear to any one who, standing before a picture where this

glitter obtrudes itself, would take down the work and substitute a true mirror in its stead, when he would at once see a *perfect* reflexion of the window or other source of light. Now the first question to be considered is, how to place the source of light so that the spectator when at a convenient point for viewing the picture is not annoyed with this imperfect reflection on its surface ; and when a gallery is to be built for the reception of works of art, this should be one of the paramount considerations. This would appear to be an abstruse question, since we so seldom see a thoroughly well-lighted gallery, it is however by no means the case, the laws of vision are absolute, and are clearly defined, and the exact places where all these reflections will be troublesome can as easily be laid down by lines, as the plans and dimensions of the galleries themselves.

But there is another condition to which it is necessary to refer in galleries which like the Sheepshanks Gallery, are lighted from the top (the most usual method, from the much greater hanging-space obtained). One of the first requisites is sufficiency of light, but as the simplest way to remedy the evil of reflection is to diminish the size of the opening for the admission of light, and raise the roof, this expedient is often resorted to, (the more that it accords well with the grandiose views of the architect). It thus happens that in shunning one evil we fall into another ; by raising the roof, it is true that the place of the reflection is raised above the usual hanging line of the pictures, but alas ! they are as in a well where but few rays of light can penetrate. I will illustrate this by reference to one of the most celebrated galleries of modern Europe, which I have lately carefully studied.

Figure 1 gives you the section of Baron Klenze's famous gallery at Munich, the Pina cotheek (you will find the lines in his evidence in the Report on Fine Arts, in 1836). Now if a spectator stands in the middle of the gallery at A so as to see the upper pictures, the window light would be reflected, if the wall were a polished surface, between C and D; if he remove to B to see the lower pictures nearer the eye, the reflection would be found between E and F, but still above the pictures



which are within his line of vision ; if, however, to give more light, the skylight were lowered to half the height, as at X, the reflections, when the spectator is at A or B respectively, would be lowered to within the lines *g* and *h*, *i* and *k* respectively, and would become troublesome to the spectator.

Now, on examining this gallery, I made a note of the extreme want of light to see the pictures. In the room containing those of the early Flemish school, (a school of extreme finish, and which is first entered), it was impossible to see the works at all ; when the sun was shining, it was necessary to draw the blinds to prevent the admission of its direct rays, and the advantage of a bright day was lost ; and, on a cloudy day, the light was wholly insufficient. Yet Murray, who somehow or other is a great authority with travellers, says that Klenze, "in addition to the praise of having constructed a beautiful edifice, deserves *also* that of having formed the most convenient and appropriate receptacle for paintings in Europe." On my return, I examined the proportion of light in the Sheepshanks Gallery in relation to the rooms of the Pinacothek, and found them as follows ; — the proportion of the opening for light in the Pinacothek to the square surface of the floor I found to be about 1-13th, or as 178 feet to 2,310 feet ; while that of the new gallery for our pictures is as 482 feet to 954 feet, or more than one half. This is sufficiently different ; but when in addition to this it is stated, that the light itself is nearly three times nearer the floor in our gallery than at Munich, viz., as 20 feet 9 inches to 52 feet, it will be seen that we have nearly fifteen times as much volume of light on our pictures. By means of blinds we are enabled to regulate the light as we please in sunny weather when the glare might be too great, and have amply sufficient in cloudy weather. Yet with all this, the glitter point is so managed as to be (at all convenient points for viewing the pictures) quite above them and out of the way. Moreover, by a nice calculation we have been able so to adjust the gas-lighting, that the angle of incidence falls within the same place of reflection as the daylight, and is equally removed from the surface of the pictures. One of the causes of the greater abundance of the light in the gallery here arises from the skylight being carried quite through, and the coving of the ceiling being only from the sides towards the centre, and not from the ends also. Thus a far greater volume of light is admitted, and the pictures in the corners of the room are not sacrificed ; for, of course, in the Munich gallery, the pictures in the

corners are much further removed from the light, on account of the covings, than even those in the centres of the sides and ends. It must be observed, however, that the smallness of our pictures prevented their being hung much above the eye. The average hanging is 9 ft. 6 in.; while at Munich the gallery was expressly constructed to hang to the height of 29 feet. This is far too high. I think no picture (unless its own size exceeds these dimensions, or it has been composed for a high point of view) should be hung much higher than 15 feet to the top of the frame. And one fault of the Munich gallery is, that a construction suitable in *some* degree for such large pictures as "The Last Judgment" by Reubens, though even these are not abundantly lighted, is carried throughout, and is the same for rooms in which pictures of minute finish are hung: some of these to the height I have named (and, as the arrangement is chronological, of these, perchance, some of the best), while, as I have shown, all are ill and insufficiently lighted.

The Salon Carré in the Louvré is another example of insufficient lighting; the source of light in this noble room being far too much removed from the pictures to light the smaller works properly when the day is the least cloudy. I have not the measurements of this gallery, but I believe it to be little less than sixty feet from the floor to the glass. The evil is increased by hanging the pictures out at the top (which is not the case at Munich, where they are fixed to the wall upright). From this hanging forward only a part of the light reaches the surface of the pictures, on some of which I have seen several inches of shadow thrown by the frames; and where the surface of the picture is uneven a new source of annoyance is developed from this practice.

This leads me to remark on this mode of hanging pictures as another great obstruction to their proper lighting. Although by this means also the glitter on their surface may be wholly obviated, and in hanging high it is almost a necessity thus to bring the surface of the picture at right angles with the line of view of the spectator; yet if the light is high, hanging a picture forward at top deprives it of much of the light from above. Pictures, if they are worth preserving in a National Gallery at all, are

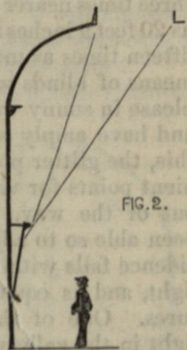


FIG. 2.

well worth the wall space to admit of their being seen properly; and I again repeat that works should not be hung much more than half the height of those in the Pinacothek, and thus much of the necessity for hanging forward obviated.

The Sheepshanks Gallery is provided with an outer skylight on the roof and an inner light of ground glass below it. This obviates all danger from leakages, affords ample opportunity for abundant ventilation, and screens the pictures from the direct rays of the sun, so that it is only in the extreme brightness and heat of summer that the blinds need be used.

The gallery at Munich consists of a succession of galleries lighted from the top, such as I have described, and communicating with a succession of small low cabinets lighted from the side. An opportunity was thus afforded me of seeing how unsuitable are such side-lighted rooms for the reception of pictures. Much of each side wall, where the light is good, is necessarily lost in the openings communicating from cabinet to cabinet. The side on which the window is placed is wholly useless, and on the side opposite the window the pictures are seen under the most unfavourable conditions possible, the spectator not only standing in his own light, but also having the reflection of the window glittering on every picture near the eye. If this is the case in the smaller cabinets lighted by one opening, how much more is it in the large room at the end of the galleries, lighted at the side by four large windows? On the wall opposite these windows numerous important pictures are hung, and it is *wholly* impossible to take up any position in the room from which you can see them. Moreover, the plan of the building—a succession of cabinets parallel with the main galleries—is a very bad one, for openings into each cabinet from the main galleries (as, I believe, was the intention of the architect) would have led to the loss of a large amount of valuable wall space, for I think there are twenty-three cabinets, wanting, therefore, twenty-three openings. As at present arranged, with merely an opening at each end and one in the middle, you have constantly to return through many cabinets to gain the principal gallery, if you wish to study the works of a master or of a school in their entirety, since the plan of arrangement has been to put the large works of a school in the galleries, the small ones in the cabinets, thus widely separated from each other. From what I have said, you will infer, what is indeed the

truth, that I do not concur in Murray's praise of this gallery. I think it a very handsome architectural erection, but it is very inconvenient and bad as a picture gallery, and I hope will NOT be made the model for anything done in this country, as it already has been at Dresden. Though some of the defects have been there modified, yet the faultiness of the original plan of necessity remains.

I must, however, be understood to speak only of the arrangements for the display of the treasures of Art in these galleries. As to their architectural features, they are, as all well know, extremely grand and noble structures.

There is another mode of lighting picture-galleries from the top to which it is desirable to refer. I mean that wherein a lantern treatment of the ceiling is adopted, instead of by means of flat skylights, as in the Sheepshanks Gallery.

This method of lighting has been followed in our own National Gallery, as well as in that of the Bourgeois Collection at Dulwich. Where only the perpendicular sides of the lantern are glazed, there is often a great deficiency of light by this mode, since in a long gallery the pictures on each side only receive the advantage of half the light admitted into the room, and that the furthest removed from them, that is to say, from the opposite side of the lantern. When the whole or part of the top is glazed also, as is the case in some of the rooms at Trafalgar Square, the only advantage is a cumbrous architectural structure impeding a certain proportion of light, instead of the simpler one of flat lights.

There is no doubt that the immense improvement in the manufacture of sheet-glass, which we owe partly to the removal of the duties, and partly to the efforts made to meet the wants of the great Exhibition building of 1851, has enabled us safely to adopt a construction which was hardly available when the Dulwich or the present National Gallery was built;—I mean, by permitting the use of very large sheets of glass without laps. When the Dulwich Gallery was first erected, it used to be quoted as a well-lighted gallery. On a late visit, however, I could not but feel that it was far too dark, taking into consideration the gloominess of our atmosphere, and the obscurity of the pictures by the old masters for which it was intended. These have been so lowered in tone by time that they demand the fullest amount of light that can be admitted, while their highly polished surfaces, arising from continuous varnishing, requires that all reflections should be carefully avoided, much more so, indeed,

than in modern pictures, which are many of them unvarnished, and their scale of colour much brighter. I may here advert to the management of the Dulwich Collection as a type of the anti-public feeling that was current half a century ago, when its regulations were first framed. No one is admitted without a ticket. These tickets are only obtainable at a distance, in one or two places, and by particular application. Thus it happens, as it ever does under such arrangements, that the visits are at the lowest rate, and the public obtain hardly any advantage from what was intended solely for their benefit.

It may be said that it is quite possible to arrange a small gallery such as this for the Sheepshanks pictures, and to gain sufficient light, while avoiding any reflections, but that far greater difficulties have to be overcome in planning a gallery of greater width and height suitable for large pictures. But by careful attention to the laws of reflection, and to the fullest admission of light in the right situation, I do not think that increased size necessarily implies increased difficulties. It may be asked, What then is the cause that galleries for the reception of pictures have been so frequently failures as to the proper display of the works they contain? I believe it to be simply this. The architect is too often more intent on displaying himself, and what he improperly considers *his art*, than the works for which the structure is intended. Thus a noble façade, a handsome portico, a range of columns, a splendid elevation of the exterior, outweighs all consideration of that which the building is to contain; while even within everything must be sacrificed to classical examples, to Vitruvian proportions, to lofty vaultings, to cornices and covings, which leave the pictures to the accident of being seen well or ill as the chances arising out of the other contingencies may determine. The shrine is elegant, but the pictures are entombed.

But is this to be permitted in any buildings that the nation may erect? Are the gems to be lost in the costliness of their setting? Is it right to sacrifice our national pictures to a showy outside or to a palatial elevation? Think of the tens of thousands our national pictures have cost us; think of the value of such noble gifts as this of Mr. Sheepshanks, and the others I have already noticed, and say if we are to be thus deprived of their enjoyment.

The first thing to be demanded in a National Gallery of Art, whether of Foreign or British pictures, should be the

perfect adaptation of the place to their arrangement and display. This is hardly the work of an architect. It should be determined by a painter. The necessary proportions, the height and situation of the lights, the widths, the heights to which the pictures should be hung, the proportions of different compartments or cabinets as adapted to the pictures they are to contain, should be settled first, and by or in conjunction with the painter, and the block, thus absolutely and unchangeably determined, may then be given up to the architect to treat in conformity with the rules of his art. There can be no doubt that by such means a nobler, because more characteristic, structure would arise, than by the usual method of neglecting the utilities and considering the elevation and decoration before the purpose. And if not, are not the pictures the object, to which architecture is wholly secondary. In building a palace, exterior grandeur and interior magnificence are as much requisites as its uses for habitation or residence ; such may be given up wholly to the architect ; here he may revel in the display of his art, and carry the decoration to any extent that is not inconsistent with the requisite amount of contrast :— but in a gallery for art, the art is the one thing to which all should be subservient ; the pictures, in this case, are not meant to serve as subsidiary decorations to the architecture, but are themselves the jewels for which the building forms only a fitting and suitable casket.

The space already spoken of beneath the Sheepshanks Gallery, and which is included in the cost which I have named, is divided into four rooms, intended to provide for the secure display of some of the choicest treasures of the Museum of Ornamental Art. It was necessary here also to obtain the greatest amount of light that was consistent with security, and it will be found that the square contents of the windows by which it is lighted form considerably more than half the contents of the walls in which they are inserted.

In constructing a building of two stories, so as to be as far as possible fire-proof, it was necessary to have a floor impervious to its attacks, and the one adopted for the new galleries fulfils this condition. It is formed of wrought-iron joists, filled in with concrete, on the top of which, embedded in cement, is laid a surface of tiles. Thus all danger of fire extending from below is obviated, and, thanks to the excellent manufacture of tiles by our countryman, Mr. Minton, a floor is obtained, rich, yet sober in colour, and

remarkably hard and free from dust, very little being observable after those days on which the gallery has had its most thronged attendances. It is also easily cleaned, and requires no sort of covering, such as matting, cocoa fibre, or carpet, which retain large quantities of dust. The colour thus obtained is very agreeable, and gives a feeling of completeness and richness to the Gallery, notwithstanding the floor is naked.

I may say a word as to the arrangements for warming. These are beneath the Yorkshire stone floor of the lower rooms. A large volume of air drawn from without the building, and which it is intended to strain from impurities, is thrown in a continuous, yet easily regulated stream into both the upper and lower rooms, while an extracting shaft and other provisions are made to carry off the vitiated air, particularly that arising from the combustion of the gas at night. It has been found that dry heated air at once ascends to the top of the building, but that, if moderately humid, it distributes itself equally throughout the apartment. With this view great care is taken, in heating the air, to *retain* a proper degree of humidity, and not to dry it in the heating process. The result has been found to be that the ventilation, during the extreme heat of the past summer, was such as to keep the gallery, even when crowded with visitors, below the temperature of the day-time in the shade, and agreeably cool at night: the only faulty point as to the winter heating being that the places for the admission of the warmed air are found to be confined too much to one place in each apartment, and would be better distributed much more throughout each room.

It only remains for me to offer, as concisely as possible, a few remarks on the *situation* to be selected for this National Gallery of British Art. This is a point which has to be determined by the people themselves through their proper organ, the House of Commons; but as the determination will be best arrived at by a review of facts bearing on the case, it is most desirable to discuss them.

Mr. Sheepshanks' decision that *his* collection at least should find a permanent abiding place at Kensington, has again been valuable to us, inasmuch as it has resulted in some most important data bearing on the great question of the site of the united collection.

It was said, before the removal of the Department of Art from Marlborough House, that the new museum would find but few visitors at Kensington; but, as has been elsewhere

remarked, "in the present age all negative prophecies are dangerous," and so it has proved in this instance.

It is not possible to compare the attendance this year with the preceding one, because the collection had then been partially removed from Marlborough House, which was closed for some months. If we take 1855, however, the visitors to the Museum of the Department, aided as it was by the joint attraction, in the same building, of the Vernon collection of pictures and the numbers flocking to see the Wellington Car, reached a total of 78,487. It may be said that in that year the visitors to all our public exhibitions showed a diminution, on account perhaps of the excitement of the war; and I prefer therefore to take 1854, when the visitors to the Museum of Art at Pall Mall reached, during the twelve months, to 104,823.

Let us compare with this the numbers attending at South Kensington. Since the 24th June in the present year, when the Exhibition was opened to the public, up to this evening, a period of five months, the visitors have reached a total of 219,134 persons, while of these the large number of 14,902 have paid a fee of 6*d.* to enter as students. It may perhaps be said that this large number, more than doubling in five months the whole year's attendance in 1854, has arisen from opening the museum at night. This is by no means the case. The visitors in the day-time during these five months have amounted to 93,799, within a trifle of the whole number attending Marlborough House in twelve months, which shows us that the removal of the Galleries to Kensington has so far placed no obstacle to a *largely increased* attendance.

There can be no doubt that, from the changes which have taken place, and are still in progress in the Metropolis, the working population now dwell almost wholly in the suburbs of London, and are to be found mostly in Lambeth, Camberwell, Vauxhall, Chelsea, Kensington, Paddington, Camden Town, Islington, Whitechapel, and Rotherhithe, and it is only on the occasion of holiday-making, or at night, that they can visit the public collections. Casual visits by the operative classes are rare.

When the labouring-man makes a holiday, he desires to enjoy it fully, and in the summer time seeks the added pleasure of free air and green turf. This is seen in the numbers that save their money and club for an annual journey by van to Hampton Court, not alone to see the pictures, although this is the ostensible purpose of their visit, but to

enjoy a ramble in the palace gardens, or to eat their food under the chesnuts at Bushy. To such it would add to the pleasure of a visit to galleries of art to ramble afterwards in Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens ; and such holidays are earnestly to be encouraged, they tend to bring the whole family—the working man, his wife, and children—to enjoy themselves *together*, and at the same time to get that fresh air and healthy out-of-doors exercise from which they are but too much debarred at home. This is an argument for Kensington, with its parks and gardens, as the seat of the national collections of art.

The great feature of the new Museum is, no doubt, the arrangement made for lighting and opening it to the operative classes after their working hours. Half the vices of the labouring man arise from the closeness, dirt, and discomforts of his home. In order to avoid this, he leaves his family for the beershop or the taproom, where he at least finds light, warmth, and companionship, and takes little heed of the habits of expense and vice that grow with the indulgence.

Is it not a noble thing to have provided a healthy pleasure for such as these—to have been the means of providing a place where men can assemble, not for lonely self-indulgence, but with wives and children, enjoying together with them, sights and pleasures that encourage the desire to make home more comfortable? Is it not a great thing that such public benefactors as Mr. Vernon and Mr. Sheepshanks have been the means, even if only for a few hours, of keeping thousands and tens of thousands from the haunts of vice and debauchery, of assembling them with their fellow-men “clothed and in their right minds,” enjoying themselves lawfully, with wives and little ones?

It is certainly then worth some sacrifice on the part of the State, not only to perpetuate, but to spread as widely as possible these advantages ; and some of the views expressed by Mr. Sheepshanks in his deed of gift, seem in accordance with the present action of the Department of Art, and tend to promote in every possible way this greater extension.

The Department, as Mr. Cole told you in last week's lecture, has a general rather than a local action. It promotes the distribution and circulation as well as attends to the accumulation of art treasures. Why not let this action which has been determined on as between London and the provinces have effect as between London and its suburbs

also. There is every reason why there should be one centre of action; one great store, as it were, of the nation's wealth; this must be in London, and may well be at Kensington, where ample space, the one thing needful, is at the command of Government; but there is no reason why we should have only one gallery for Art in London, any more than that we should have only one gallery of Art for London. Let those who desire to retain a collection in the centre, maintain the vested rights of Trafalgar Square; it may be used as a *Salon Carré*, a tribune for our choicest treasures if you will, and then Kensington, besides being the *depôt* of the historical collection and the centre for circulation, may, in the Sheepshanks Collection, be also one of a number of local galleries of art. Taking the length from St. Paul's to Kensington for a radius, and drawing a circle round the cathedral with this radius, you will find that it intersects Tufnel Park and Victoria Park, while it also falls in the neighbourhood of Greenwich and Dulwich. Why should not each of these places have its art-gallery? Dulwich is already provided, it only needs to administer it in the way best suited to popular wants, at present so strangely neglected, and to light it at night, and a large constituency from all the surrounding districts would flock to it.

Let suitable buildings be provided in the other districts, for which a means is provided by Mr. Ewart's Act. Such buildings once erected, and I have shown you that the cost of them is small, collections not only to delight but to instruct the public might be formed, each remaining twelve-months in a locality, and then changed for another in rotation. The series commencing with a collection of Portraits well explained by means of labels, might be followed by a Modern Collection, a Water Colour Collection, a Turner Collection, a Collection of Drawings and sketches, a Collection of Old Masters, a Collection of Etchings and Engravings, a Historical Art Collection, thus affording successive instruction and constant variety. Other persons no doubt would imitate the noble example of Sir F. Bourgeois, Mr. Vernon, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Sheepshanks, and aid with gifts a scheme so noble, if commenced by the State. The people would be gradually educated in art by collections leading them up from what they can feel to what they must understand in order to enjoy. These arrangements once adopted might easily be extended to our great provincial towns, so that the whole people would benefit by the nation's wealth; and thousands who now waste life, health, and

substance in coarse and sensual enjoyments be refined in taste, improved in morals, and taught to use some of those nobler faculties, which, as the gift of God, were not intended to be left uncultivated and neglected.